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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/777,802	02/12/2004	Sheng-Ping (Samuel) Zhong	03-235	5369

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EXAMINER	
AHMED, HASAN SYED	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1615	

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
31 DAYS	02/09/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/777,802	ZHONG, SHENG-PING (SAMUEL)	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Hasan S. Ahmed	1615	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☒ Claim(s) 1-26 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

I. Claims 1-4 and 17-25, drawn to a medical article comprising a release region, in turn comprising: (a) a polymeric carrier comprising a first polymer and (b) drug loaded nanoparticles dispersed within said polymeric carrier, said drug loaded nanoparticles comprising a layered silicate material and a first therapeutic agent, classified in class 424, subclass 423.

II. Claims 1, 5-10, and 17-25, drawn to a medical article comprising a first and second polymer, classified in class 424, subclass 423.

III. Claims 1, 11, and 17-25, drawn to a medical article comprising a release region, in turn comprising a polymeric carrier comprising a first therapeutic agent, classified in class 424, subclass 423.

IV. Claims 1 and 12-25, drawn to a medical article comprising a first and second therapeutic agent, classified in class 424, subclass 423.

V. Claim 26, drawn to a method of providing a medical article, classified in class 424, subclass 423.

* * * * *

Claim 1 links inventions I-VI. The restriction requirement between the linked inventions is subject to the nonallowance of the linking claim, claim 1. Upon the indication of allowability of the linking claims, the restriction requirement as to the linked

inventions shall be withdrawn and any claims depending from or otherwise requiring all the limitations of the allowable linking claim will be rejoined and fully examined for patentability in accordance with 37 CFR 1.104. Claims that require all the limitations of an allowable linking claim will be entered as a matter of right if the amendment is presented prior to final rejection or allowance, whichever is earlier. Amendments submitted after final rejection are governed by 37 CFR 1.116; amendments submitted after allowance are governed by 37 CFR 1.312.

Applicants are advised that if any claim(s) including all the limitations of the allowable linking claim(s) is/are presented in a continuation or divisional application, the claims of the continuation or divisional application may be subject to provisional statutory and/or nonstatutory double patenting rejections over the claims of the instant application. Where a restriction requirement is withdrawn, the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 121 are no longer applicable. *In re Ziegler*, 443 F.2d 1211, 1215, 170 USPQ 129, 131-32 (CCPA 1971). See also MPEP § 804.01.

* * * * *

The inventions are distinct, each from the other for the following reasons:

Groups I-V

Inventions I and II are unrelated. Inventions are unrelated if it can be shown that they are not disclosed as capable of use together and they have different designs, modes of operation, and effects (MPEP § 802.01 and § 806.06). In the instant case, Group I is directed to a medical article comprising a release region, in turn comprising a polymeric carrier comprising a first polymer while Group II is directed to a medical article

comprising a release region, in turn comprising a polymeric carrier comprising a second polymer.

Inventions I and III are unrelated. In the instant case, Group I is directed to a medical article comprising a release region, in turn comprising a polymeric carrier comprising a first polymer while Group III is directed to a medical article comprising a release region, in turn comprising a polymeric carrier further comprising a therapeutic agent.

Inventions I and IV are unrelated. In the instant case, Group I is directed to a medical article comprising a first therapeutic agent while Group IV is directed to a medical article comprising a first and second therapeutic agent.

Inventions I and V are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make another and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process, such as building the release-region forming fluid into a medical article, rather than producing it separately, then applying it.

*

Groups II-V

Inventions II and III are unrelated. In the instant case, Group II is directed to a medical article comprising a release region, in turn comprising a polymeric carrier comprising a second polymer while Group III is directed to a medical article comprising

a release region, in turn comprising a polymeric carrier further comprising a therapeutic agent.

Inventions II and IV are unrelated. In the instant case, Group II is directed to a medical article comprising a first therapeutic agent, while Group IV is directed to a medical article comprising a first and second therapeutic agent.

Inventions II and V are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make another and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process, such as building the release-region forming fluid into a medical article, rather than producing it separately, then applying it.

*

Groups III-V

Inventions III and IV are unrelated. In the instant case, Group III is directed to a medical article comprising a first therapeutic agent, while Group IV is directed to a medical article comprising a first and second therapeutic agent.

Inventions III and V are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make another and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product as claimed can be made by another

and materially different process, such as building the release-region forming fluid into a medical article, rather than producing it separately, then applying it.

*

Groups IV and V

Inventions IV and V are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make another and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process, such as building the release-region forming fluid into a medical article, rather than producing it separately, then applying it.

* * * * *

The examiner has required restriction between product and process claims. Where applicant elects claims directed to the product, and the product claims are subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims that depend from or otherwise require all the limitations of the allowable product claim will be considered for rejoinder. All claims directed a nonelected process invention must require all the limitations of an allowable product claim for that process invention to be rejoined.

In the event of rejoinder, the requirement for restriction between the product claims and the rejoined process claims will be withdrawn, and the rejoined process claims will be fully examined for patentability in accordance with 37 CFR 1.104. Thus, to be allowable, the rejoined claims must meet all criteria for patentability including the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101, 102, 103 and 112. Until all claims to the elected product are found allowable, an otherwise proper restriction requirement between product claims and process claims may be maintained. Withdrawn process claims that are not commensurate in scope with an allowable product claim will not be rejoined. See MPEP § 821.04(b). Additionally, in order to retain the right to rejoinder in accordance with the above policy, applicant is advised that the process claims should be amended during prosecution to require the limitations of the product claims. **Failure to do so may result in a loss of the right to rejoinder**. Further, note that the prohibition against double patenting rejections of 35 U.S.C. 121 does not apply where the restriction requirement is withdrawn by the examiner before the patent issues. See MPEP § 804.01.

* * * * *

This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species:

Group I:

- Election of polarity of therapeutic agent and first polymer:
    a. hydrophilic therapeutic agent and hydrophobic first polymer (Claim 2)
    b. hydrophobic therapeutic agent and hydrophilic first polymer (Claim 4)
- Election of implantation target:
    a. vasculature (Claim 19)
    b. the organs listed in claim 20
- Election of layered silicate material:
    a. smectite (Claim 23)
    b. compounds listed in claim 24

*

Group II:

- Election of second polymer location:
    a. polymeric carrier comprises second polymer (Claim 6)
    b. nanoparticles comprise second polymer (Claim 7)
- Election of polarity of first and second polymer:

a. hydrophilic first polymer and hydrophobic second polymer (Claim 8)

b. hydrophobic first polymer and hydrophilic second polymer (Claim 9)

- Election of implantation target:

a. vasculature (Claim 19)

b. the organs listed in claim 20

- Election of layered silicate material:

a. smectite (Claim 23)

b. compounds listed in claim 24

*

Group III:

- Election of implantation target:

a. vasculature (Claim 19)

b. the organs listed in claim 20

- Election of layered silicate material:

a. smectite (Claim 23)

b. compounds listed in claim 24

*

Group IV:

- Election of second therapeutic agent location:

a. polymeric carrier comprises second therapeutic agent (Claim 13)

b. nanoparticles comprise second therapeutic agent (Claim 15)

- Election of polarity of first and second therapeutic agent:

a. hydrophilic first therapeutic agent and hydrophobic second therapeutic agent (Claim 14)

b. hydrophilic first and second therapeutic agent (Claim 16)

- Election of implantation target:

a. vasculature (Claim 19)

b. the organs listed in claim 20

- Election of layered silicate material:

a. smectite (Claim 23)

b. compounds listed in claim 24

* * * * *

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claim 1 is generic.

* * * * *

Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim

is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

* * * * *

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which depend from or otherwise require all the limitations of an allowable generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

* * * * *

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

* * * * *

The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To reserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

Should Applicant traverse on the ground that the inventions or species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the inventions or species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions

unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C.103(a) of the other invention.

☆

Correspondence

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hasan S. Ahmed whose telephone number is 571-272-4792. The examiner can normally be reached on 9am - 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael P. Woodward can be reached on 571-272-8373. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Humera N Sheikh

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